

Prostate Cancer Health Message

What Is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is a cancer that develops in the prostate, a gland found only in men. A healthy prostate gland, part of the male reproductive system, is about the size of a walnut. Some prostate cancers can grow and spread quickly, but most grow slowly, initially causing no symptoms. The cancer may spread to other parts of the body, such as bones, lymph nodes, and bladder.

How Common Is Prostate Cancer?

- ▶ It is the second most common cancer diagnosed in men in the United States, after skin cancer.
- ▶ For reasons that remain unclear, it occurs more often in African American men than in any other group in the United States.
- ▶ Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in men in the United States.

The cause of most prostate cancers is unknown. The most likely cause is related to changes in the genetic material (DNA) in the cells. DNA is the substance in the cells that makes up genes, which provide instructions for how a cell works. DNA changes can be passed down through families or can be caused by environment or lifestyle factors.

Lowering the Risk of Prostate Cancer

Eat Right

- ▶ Choose healthy foods and beverages for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.
- ▶ Eat at least 2.5 cups of vegetables and fruits each day.
- ▶ Choose whole grains.
- ▶ Limit red meats and processed meats.

Supplements

- ▶ No vitamins or supplements have been proven yet to lower the risk of prostate cancer.

American Cancer Society (ACS) Recommendations for Early Detection

Discussions with a health professional should begin:

- ▶ At age 50 for men at average risk for prostate cancer and with at least a 10-year life expectancy.
- ▶ At age 45 for men at a high risk for prostate cancer:
 - African American men
 - Men who have a first-degree relative (father, brother, or son) diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age (younger than age 65).
- ▶ At age 40 for men at even higher risk:
 - Those with several first-degree relatives who had prostate cancer at an early age.

Screening Tests Most Often Used

Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test: The chance of having prostate cancer goes up as the PSA level goes up.

Digital rectal exam (DRE): Less effective than PSA blood test in finding prostate cancer, but it can sometimes find cancers in men with normal PSA levels.

Prostate Cancer Risk Factors

Risk factors are anything that can increase or decrease a person's chance of getting a disease. Some factors can be changed and some cannot. However, it is important to be informed of the risk factors.

Risk Factor	Comments
Age	More than 9 out of 10 prostate cancers are found in men age 50 and older.
Race/ethnicity	African American men have the highest risk and are more likely to be diagnosed at an advanced stage.
Family history	Having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles a man's risk of developing this disease. The risk is much higher for men with several affected relatives, particularly if their relatives were young at the time the cancer was found.
Diet	A diet high in red meat or high-fat dairy products and low in fruits and vegetables may raise the risk.

More Information Is Available

Visit the American Cancer Society (ACS) online at www.cancer.org, or call 1-800-227-2345 to talk with an ACS cancer information specialist.

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